852 When they go into the bush, either to cut down straw or for any other reason, they sing invocations to the spirits of the paths and of the trees in order to propitiate them, to draw their blessing, and to avert illness. They chase everyone in their path, approach the villages, and, if they can, seize a few chickens, goats, or sheep as an extra tidbit. This is the custom, and they even steal the animals of their relatives in this fashion. At night they come up near the huts and beat everyone they meet; they take everything they can find, and no one would think of resisting them. /43/ In any case, during that time, people take good care of their children and send them plenty of food. To have a child undergoing circumcision is a burden to a family.

852 563 869 When the circumcised group consists largely of Moslems, Yarsé or Peul, the one in charge of the circumcision assembles them during rest periods, in the evening, or sometimes in the middle of the night, in order to instruct them. There does not seem to be any esoteric doctrine, and the instructions deal with the glorification of ancestors who were also circumcised there. Only those who are circumcised can enter heaven and have many children; those who are not will taste no happiness in the other life and will remain sterile. The group is also taught that God sits under a black tree on a sheep skin, that he eats from a dish and drinks from a bottle. It is all very childish. They are also told that they must not disclose to anyone, under penalty of death or at least of serious illness, what they have seen and learned during the circumcision period. This is to prevent them from revealing the robberies committed during that time and from discouraging those who should like to undergo the operation; for although it is tempting to eat well, to play a great deal, and especially to wear beautiful clothes, it is also unpleasant to be lashed with willows at the slightest slip, or for not dancing well, for quarreling with or insulting someone, for speaking Mossi, for being slow to go to work.

852 Occasionally, at circumcision time, two sticks are found on the path near the market. They were placed there on purpose, and if one looks to the right and left, he will see two children, all covered with dust and wearing dirty breechcloths. They are newly circumcised boys who are begging, and passersby drop a few cowries to the ground.

852 302 All these ceremonies are soon to end. The clothes are ready, and the children are getting tired and restive. The one in charge of the circumcision decides that the boys are to be shaved, that is, that the circumcision period will end in two weeks. The hair of the circumcised boys is not shaved off completely: strips of hair alternate with

784 born among the Peul, to whom dog flesh is forbidden, may have the
262 dog as kisgou. Sometimes the kisgou concerns only him, his son, and grandson and not his other descendants, because the son and grandson will follow his own soul, while the soul of the other descendants will follow that of his mother, their great-grandmother, to whom dog flesh is not forbidden. A sorcerer's reasoning against which there is no argument!

/89/ This kind of kisgou is the more binding of the two, but it may be terminated if the person who established it offers the proper sacrifices, or if one of his descendants, of his own will, releases himself and his children from it. Thus the family of the Saman'Naba, Prime Minister of Koupéla, has the hare as kisgou. When the naba saw his Christian brothers and son eat hare flesh with impunity, without becoming blind or leprous, he took to eating it himself without ill effects.

784 Parents teach their children about the various family kisgou and
869 instill the proper awe into them so they will not eat these animals.
753 Involuntary disregard of one's kisgou may lead to illness, and the sorcerer consulted indicates what has to be done and what sacrifice must be offered to the tangandé to obtain his forgiveness. If the slip was deliberate, if it showed contempt, no forgiveness is possible.

784 The second kind of kisgou is quite special and personal. It consists
758 of the various prohibitions imposed by the sorcerers on a sick person.
262 A certain kind of meat or sauce is forbidden to the patient, or he may not drink water containing millet flour, or he may not eat millet or bean cakes. This is how a poor rachitic child with a heart disease was successively forbidden practically every kind of food. His relatives had the greatest difficulty finding those foods that were not forbidden to him, and eventually he died of starvation. All such kisgou terminate of course with the illness that caused them, unless the disease is incurable and lasts to the end of the patient's life.

Chapter 2. The Cult

000 If we define religion with Mgr. Le Roy (1) as "The body of beliefs,

1. Mgr. Le Roy, op. cit., p. 49.